Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics

Language
- 1996 Census Results -

Northwest Territories

Statistics Canada conducted the national census during 1996 and this report is one of a series of reports presenting results from the 1996 census for the Northwest Territories. Specifically, in this report the focus is on language and information is provided on: (i) mother tongue; (ii) home language; (iii) ability to speak Canada's official languages and (iv) knowledge of other languages. The tables in this report present information for all NWT languages where there were 100 or more responses for mother tongue. Detailed information by community will be made available at a later date. The planned release dates for other variables from the 1996 census are provided at the end of this report.

English is the most common mother tongue (language first learned and still understood) in the Northwest Territories, with 57% of territorial residents reporting English as their mother tongue. The second most common mother tongue is Inuktitut at 30% of the territorial population. For home language (language spoke most often at home) the percentage of territorial residents reporting English was 69% at the time of the 1996 census while 25% reported Inuktitut as their home language.

One approach to examining language retention in the territorial population is to compare the number of people who speak each language in their home, with the number of people reporting that language as their mother tongue. For example at the national level, the number of Canadians with French as their home language is 96% of the population who reported French as their mother tongue.

Examining the official languages of the Northwest Territories, only one language (English) was spoken more often as a home language than as a mother tongue. For the other eight official languages of the Northwest Territories, fewer people reported using these languages as their home language than as their mother tongue. For four languages (Inuktitut, South Slave, Dogrib, and North Slave) the percentage speaking the language in their home was more than 50% of those with the language as their mother tongue. For the four remaining languages (French, Chipewyan, Gwich'in and Cree) this value was less than 50%, with the lowest value for Gwich'in at 15%.

Table 96.3 also provides a comparison of how the relationship between the number of people speaking the language in their home and the number of people who reported the language as their mother tongue has changed over time. This information indicates declines between 1986 and 1996 for six of the seven aboriginal official languages for the Northwest Territories. Of particular note are the declines in home language use compared with mother tongue for Dogrib (97% in 1986 to 72% in 1996), Chipewyan (71% in 1986 to 44% in 1996), and Gwich'in (57% in 1986 to 15% in 1996).

Of the 64,125 territorial residents for which language information was collected, 4,215 reported that they were unable to speak English. However, most of these individuals were under the age of 10 or were 50 years of age or older. Among persons reporting an aboriginal mother tongue, some 17% indicated no ability to speak English, while approximately 89% of those unable to speak English reported Inuktitut as their mother tongue.

Not surprisingly, comparisons of Nunavut and the Western NWT indicate a very different use of language. For Nunavut , Inuktitut was the most common mother tongue reported at 72% of the population, while English was the second most common at 24%. In comparison, English was by far the most common mother tongue at 88% in the Western NWT. The most common aboriginal mother tongue in the Western NWT was equally distributed between South Slave and Dogrib at 5% each.

Overall, 81% of individuals in Nunavut reported the ability to speak English compared to 91% for the Western NWT. For aboriginal languages, 80% of individuals in Nunavut reported the ability to speak an aboriginal language compared to 19% for the Western NWT.

Table 96.1 Mother Tongue, by Type of Response
Northwest Territories, Census Years 1996 - 86

	1996			1991			1986		
	Single Response	Multiple Response	% of Pop.	Single Response	Multiple Response	% of Pop.	Single Response	Multiple Response	% of Pop.
English	35,835	990	57.2	31,140	1,125	56.0	28,010	1,770	57.0
French	1,355	130	2.3	1,380	160	2.7	1,290	270	3.0
Inuktitut	18,500	540	29.6	16,515	575	29.6	14,535	730	29.2
South Slave	2,085	70	3.3	2,255	95	4.1	2,285	220	4.8
Dogrib	2,005	40	3.2	2,100	110	3.8	1,885	180	4.0
Chipewyan	515	35	.9	545	60	1.0	480	65	1.0
North Slave (Hare)	255	20	-	35	-	-	-	-	-
Gwich'in	250	10	-	295	10	.5	165	70	-
Cree	185	35	-	195	50	-	155	55	-
German	310	20	.5	335	20	.6	320	70	.7
Dutch	100	10	-	105	-	-	100	10	-
Ukrainian	105	10	-	115	10	-	125	45	-
Chinese	225	10	-	205	10	-	185	10	-
Vietnamese	155	10	-	95	10	-	50	15	-
Tagalog (Pilipino)	240	40	-	140	30	-	100	10	-

Figure 96.1 Mother Tongue as a Percentage of Total Population
Northwest Territories, Census Years 1996 - 86

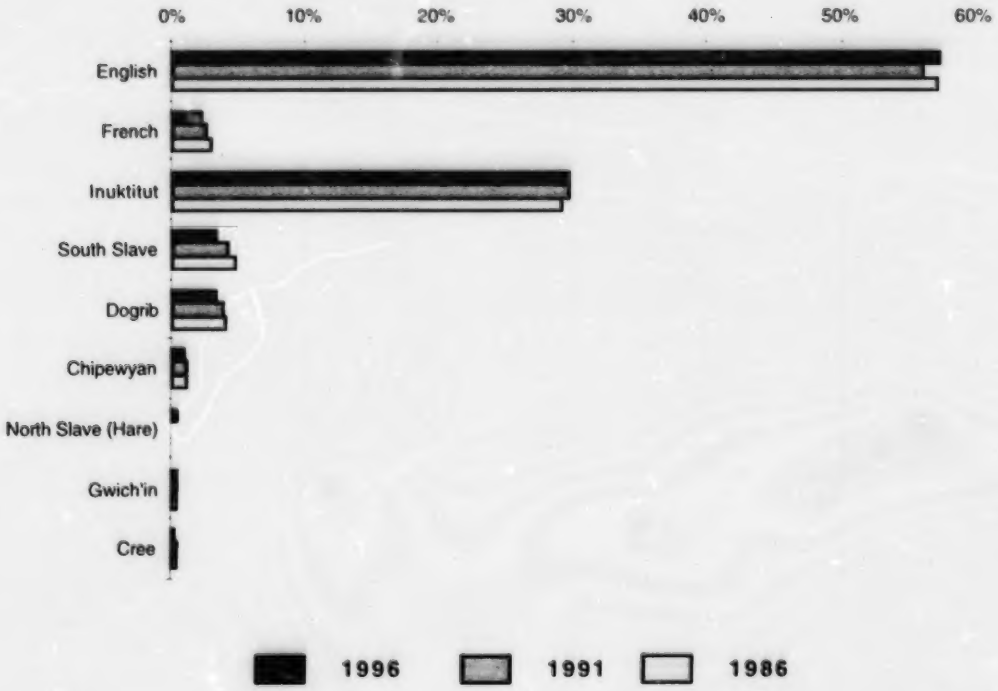

Table 96.2 Home Language, by Type of Response
Northwest Territories, Census Years 1996 - 86

	1996			1991			1986		
	Single Response	Multiple Response	% of Pop.	Single Response	Multiple Response	% of Pop.	Single Response	Multiple Response	% of Pop.
English	43,360	1,510	69.7	37,190	2,325	68.5	31,870	3,755	68.2
French	550	120	1.0	610	140	1.3	570	365	1.8
Inuktitut	14,905	970	24.6	13,540	1,395	25.9	12,155	1,850	26.8
South Slave	1,190	85	2.0	1,280	190	2.5	1,305	505	3.5
Dogrib	1,355	125	2.3	1,625	330	3.4	1,515	480	3.8
Chipewyan	210	30	-	230	80	.5	270	115	.7
North Slave (Hare)	125	35	-	15	-	-	-	-	-
Gwich'in	40	-	-	25	10	-	45	90	-
Cree	30	10	-	20	25	-	30	50	-
German	15	-	-	25	10	-	25	40	-
Dutch	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	15	-
Ukrainian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-
Chinese	140	20	-	130	30	-	130	30	-
Vietnamese	125	15	-	85	10	-	115	35	-
Tagalog (Pilipino)	110	40	-	40	55	-	25	30	-

Figure 96.2 Home Language as a Percentage of Total Population
Northwest Territories, Census Years 1996 - 86

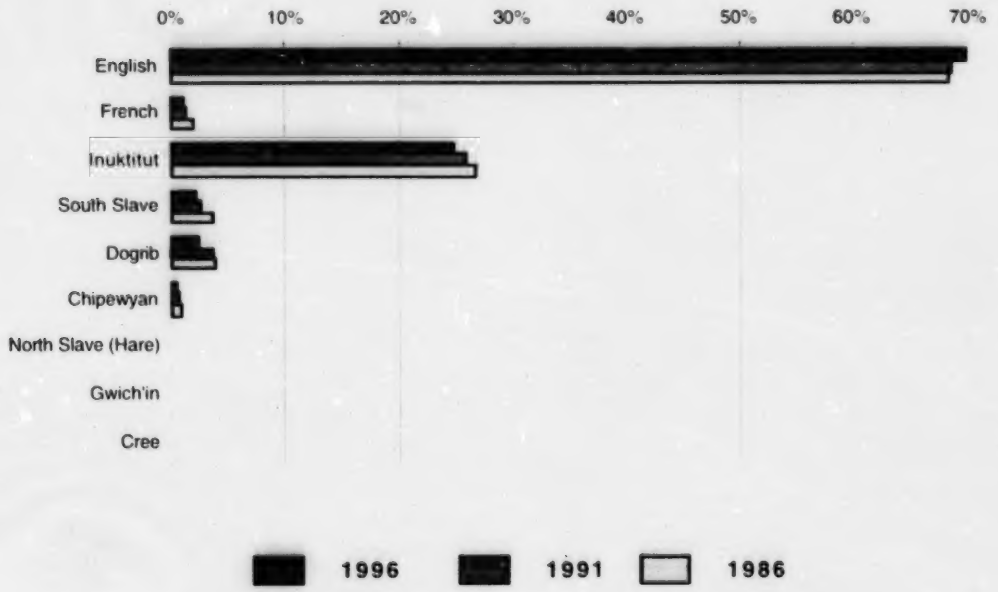

Table 96.3 Mother Tongue versus Home Language
Northwest Territories, Census Years 1996 - 86

	Census Year	Mother Tongue		Home Language		Home Language/ Mother Tongue (%)
		Single Response	Multiple Response	Single Response	Multiple Response	
English	1996	35,835	990	43,360	1,510	121.8
	1991	31,140	1,125	37,190	2,325	122.5
	1986	28,010	1,770	31,870	3,755	119.6
French	1996	1,355	130	550	120	45.1
	1991	1,380	160	610	140	48.7
	1986	1,290	270	570	365	59.9
Inuktitut	1996	18,500	540	14,905	970	83.4
	1991	16,515	575	13,540	1,395	87.4
	1986	14,535	730	12,155	1,850	91.7
South Slave	1996	2,085	70	1,190	85	59.2
	1991	2,255	95	1,280	190	62.6
	1986	2,285	220	1,305	505	72.3
Dogrib	1996	2,005	40	1,355	125	72.4
	1991	2,100	110	1,625	330	88.5
	1986	1,885	180	1,515	480	96.6
Chipewyan	1996	515	35	210	30	43.6
	1991	545	60	230	80	51.2
	1986	480	65	270	115	70.6
North Slave (Hare)	1996	255	20	125	35	58.2
	1991	35	-	15	-	42.9
	1986	-	-	-	-	-
Gwich'in	1996	250	10	40	-	15.4
	1991	295	10	25	10	11.5
	1986	165	70	45	90	57.4
Cree	1996	185	35	30	10	18.2
	1991	195	50	20	25	18.4
	1986	155	55	30	50	38.1
German	1996	310	20	15	-	4.5
	1991	335	20	25	10	9.9
	1986	320	70	25	40	16.7
Dutch	1996	100	10	-	-	-
	1991	105	-	10	-	9.5
	1986	100	10	-	15	13.6
Ukrainian	1996	105	10	-	-	-
	1991	115	10	-	-	-
	1986	125	45	-	10	5.9
Chinese	1996	225	10	140	20	68.1
	1991	205	10	130	30	74.4
	1986	185	10	130	30	82.1
Vietnamese	1996	155	10	125	15	84.8
	1991	95	10	85	10	90.5
	1986	50	15	115	35	230.8
Tagalog (Pilipino)	1996	240	40	110	40	53.6
	1991	140	30	40	55	55.9
	1986	100	10	25	30	50.0

Figure 96.3 Total Home Language as a Percentage of Total Mother Tongue
Northwest Territories, Census Years 1996 - 86

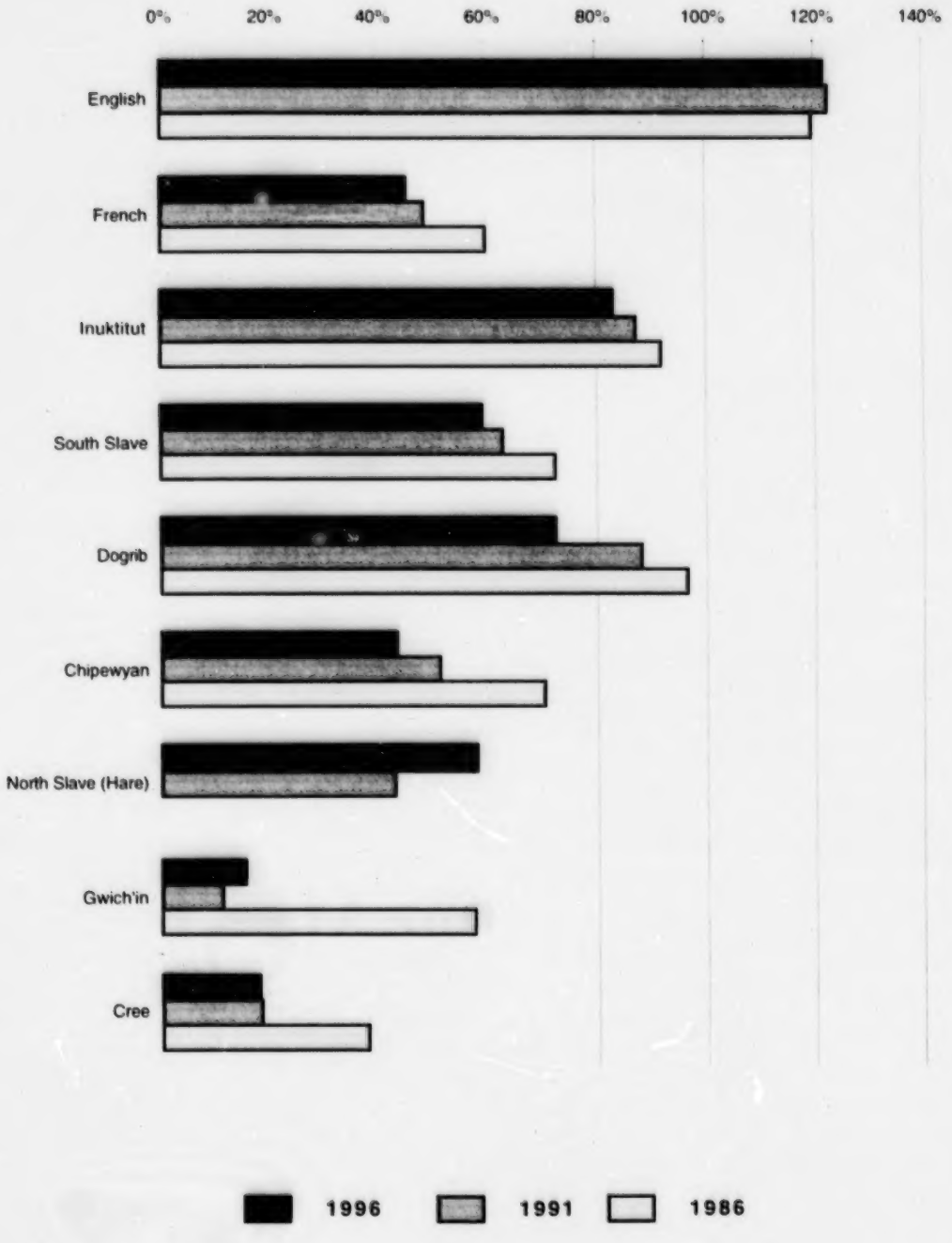

Table 96.4 Knowledge of Canada's Official Languages by Age
Northwest Territories, Census 1996

	Total	English Only	French Only	Both English and French	Neither English or French
All Ages	64,125	55,880	45	4,035	4,170
0-4	7,565	6,240	10	110	1,205
5-9	7,290	6,410	10	230	645
10-14	6,120	5,550	-	375	200
15-19	5,330	4,855	-	415	60
20-24	4,975	4,645	-	285	45
25-29	5,960	5,535	-	370	50
30-34	6,230	5,695	10	500	40
35-39	5,440	4,925	-	485	30
40-44	4,345	3,860	-	410	70
45-49	3,765	3,275	10	325	165
50-54	2,375	1,915	-	205	255
55-59	1,690	1,195	-	130	360
60-64	1,195	760	-	70	360
65 and over	1,835	1,015	-	130	690

Table 96.5 Official Languages Spoken, by Number of Non-Official Languages Known
Northwest Territories, Census 1996

		Non-Official Languages Known			
	Total	None	One	Two	Three or More
Total	64,120	33,925	29,470	590	135
English only	55,880	30,665	24,680	440	95
French only	40	30	10	-	-
Both English and French	4,035	3,235	640	130	35
Neither English or French	4,170	-	4,145	20	10

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Table 96.6 Ability to Speak Language, by Age
Northwest Territories, Census 1996

	Total Pop.	English	French	Inuktitut	South Slave	Dogrib	Chip-ewyan	North Slave (Hare)	Gwich'in	Cree
Total 1996	64,125	59,915	4,075	20,665	2,640	2,405	745	315	310	310
(%)	100.0	93.4	6.4	32.2	4.1	3.8	1.2	-	-	-
0-4	7,565	6,345	120	2,825	140	200	30	10	-	10
(%)	100.0	83.9	1.6	37.3	1.9	2.6	-	-	-	-
5-9	7,290	6,645	235	2,925	180	245	35	15	-	-
(%)	100.0	91.2	3.2	40.1	2.5	3.4	-	-	-	-
10-14	6,120	5,925	375	2,380	175	235	25	15	-	-
(%)	100.0	96.8	6.1	38.9	2.9	3.8	-	-	-	-
15-19	5,330	5,265	415	2,080	185	260	35	20	10	10
(%)	100.0	98.8	7.8	39.0	3.5	4.9	.7	-	-	-
20-24	4,975	4,930	280	1,765	210	215	35	10	10	15
(%)	100.0	99.1	5.6	35.5	4.2	4.3	.7	-	-	-
25-29	5,960	5,905	370	1,875	235	250	55	20	-	15
(%)	100.0	99.1	6.2	31.5	3.9	4.2	.9	-	-	-
30-34	6,230	6,195	500	1,635	255	190	60	35	-	30
(%)	100.0	99.4	8.0	26.2	4.1	3.0	1.0	.6	-	-
35-39	5,440	5,410	490	1,190	225	185	65	30	10	30
(%)	100.0	99.4	9.0	21.9	4.1	3.4	1.2	.6	-	.6
40-44	4,345	4,270	415	900	215	135	65	30	10	35
(%)	100.0	98.3	9.6	20.7	4.9	3.1	1.5	.7	-	.8
45-49	3,765	3,600	330	855	190	100	65	25	30	30
(%)	100.0	95.6	8.8	22.7	5.0	2.7	1.7	.7	.8	.8
50-54	2,375	2,120	205	625	130	65	45	20	40	25
(%)	100.0	89.3	8.6	26.3	5.5	2.7	1.9	.8	1.7	1.1
55-59	1,690	1,325	130	545	130	65	40	15	40	30
(%)	100	78.4	7.7	32.2	7.7	3.8	2.4	.9	2.4	1.8
60-64	1,195	835	75	440	100	50	65	20	40	20
(%)	100.0	69.9	6.3	36.8	8.4	4.2	5.4	1.7	3.3	1.7
65 and over	1,835	1,145	135	610	270	185	135	40	100	60
(%)	100.0	62.4	7.4	33.2	14.7	10.1	7.4	2.2	5.4	3.3

Table 96.7 Mother Tongue by Knowledge of Canada's Official Languages
Northwest Territories, Census 1996

	Total	Canada's Official Languages			
		English Only	French Only	Both English & French	Neither English or French
Total	64,125	55,875	40	4,040	4,170
English	35,840	33,475	-	2,345	15
French	1,355	75	25	1,260	-
Inuktitut	18,495	14,800	-	65	3,630
South Slave	2,085	1,910	10	20	150
Dogrib	2,005	1,750	-	10	240
Chipewyan	510	470	-	10	25
North Slave (Hare)	255	235	-	10	20
Gwich'in	245	245	-	-	-
Cree	185	175	-	10	-
German	315	270	-	45	-
Dutch	100	90	-	10	-
Ukrainian	100	100	-	10	-
Chinese	225	185	-	15	30
Vietnamese	150	130	-	10	15
Tagalog (Pilipino)	240	230	-	-	10

Table 96.8 Mother Tongue and Home Language, by Age

Northwest Territories, Census 1996

	All Ages	0-9 Years	10-19 Years	20-29 Years	30-39 Years	40-49 Years	50-59 Years	60 Yrs. & Over
Total	64,125	14,850	11,450	10,935	11,675	8,110	4,065	3,030
English								
Mother Tongue	35,835	8,795	6,410	6,175	7,125	4,720	1,850	760
Home Language	43,365	9,550	7,170	7,450	8,985	6,220	2,640	1,350
% Home/Mother	121.0	108.6	111.9	120.6	126.1	131.8	142.7	177.6
French								
Mother Tongue	1,355	95	85	180	420	315	165	95
Home Language	550	80	60	70	150	105	50	40
% Home/Mother	40.6	84.2	70.6	38.9	35.7	33.3	30.3	42.1
Inuktitut								
Mother Tongue	18,495	4,970	3,900	3,300	2,535	1,640	1,125	1,020
Home Language	14,900	4,335	3,325	2,520	1,735	1,175	925	890
% Home/Mother	80.6	87.2	85.3	76.4	68.4	71.6	82.2	87.3
South Slave								
Mother Tongue	2,085	215	260	340	370	350	220	320
Home Language	1,195	145	175	185	145	135	140	270
% Home/Mother	57.3	67.4	67.3	54.4	39.2	38.6	63.6	84.4
Dogrib								
Mother Tongue	2,005	305	400	415	340	215	120	215
Home Language	1,355	230	275	265	175	105	100	210
% Home/Mother	67.6	75.4	68.8	63.9	51.5	48.8	83.3	97.7
Chipewyan								
Mother Tongue	515	25	40	60	90	90	65	150
Home Language	210	10	30	30	20	10	30	75
% Home/Mother	40.8	40.0	75.0	50.0	22.2	11.1	46.2	50.0
North Slave (Hare)								
Mother Tongue	255	20	25	25	50	45	35	55
Home Language	120	20	20	10	-	20	10	40
% Home/Mother	47.1	100.0	80.0	40.0	-	44.4	28.6	72.7
Gwich'in								
Mother Tongue	245	10	10	10	20	35	65	115
Home Language	40	-	-	20	-	-	-	30
% Home/Mother	16.3	-	-	200.0	-	-	-	26.1
Cree								
Mother Tongue	180	10	10	10	35	45	35	45
Home Language	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
% Home/Mother	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	22.2

NOTE: Total and percentages are calculated for single responses only as a result percentages for Home Language/Mother Tongue may not equal those reported in Table 96.3.

Table 96.9 Comparison of Language Variables For Northwest Territories, Nunavut & Western NWT

Northwest Territories, Census 1996

	Northwest Territories		Nunavut		Western NWT	
	Count	% of Pop.	Count	% of Pop.	Count	% of Pop.
Mother Tongue						
English	35,840	55.9	5,830	23.6	30,010	76.0
French	1,360	2.1	405	1.6	955	2.4
Inuktitut	18,500	28.8	17,660	71.6	840	2.1
South Slave	2,085	3.3	10	-	2,075	5.3
Dogrib	2,000	3.1	10	-	1,990	5.0
Chipewyan	510	.8	-	-	510	1.3
Gwich'in	245	-	-	-	245	.6
Cree	180	-	10	-	170	-
Home Language						
English	43,360	67.6	8,660	35.1	34,700	87.9
French	550	.9	225	.9	325	.8
Inuktitut	14,905	23.2	14,740	59.8	165	-
South Slave	1,195	1.9	-	-	1,195	3.0
Dogrib	1,360	2.1	-	-	1,360	3.4
Chipewyan	210	-	-	-	210	.5
Gwich'in	45	-	-	-	45	-
Cree	30	-	-	-	30	-
Ability to Speak Languages						
Inuktitut	20,660	32.2	19,595	79.5	1,065	2.7
South Slave	2,645	4.1	-	-	2,645	6.7
Dogrib	2,400	3.7	-	-	2,400	6.1
Chipewyan	740	1.2	-	-	740	1.9
Gwich'in	310	-	-	-	310	.8
Cree	310	-	20	-	290	.7
Knowledge of Canada's Official Languages						
English only	55,880	87.1	20,000	81.1	35,880	90.9
French only	40	-	10	-	30	-
English and French	4,035	6.3	1,005	4.1	3,030	7.7
Neither English or French	4,170	6.5	3,640	14.8	530	1.3

Definitions

Random Rounding

- to ensure the confidentiality of census information, numbers in census tables are independently random rounded prior to publication. As a result, all numbers in census tables end in the digit 0 or 5.

Age

- Refers to the age at last birthday (as of the census reference date, May 14, 1996).

Mother Tongue

- refers to the first language learned in childhood and still understood by the individual. If there was more than one language learned at the same time and still understood, the respondent was requested to report the language he or she spoke most often at home before starting school. If the languages were used equally often, the respondent was requested to report each.

- tables in this report distinguish between single responses (just one language identified as the mother tongue) and multiple responses (more than one language identified as the mother tongue).

- to be included in the tables, a mother tongue had to be reported for at least 100 persons resident in Northwest Territories at the time of the 1996 census.

Home Language

- refers to the language spoken at home by the respondent at the time of the census. If more than one language was spoken, the respondent was requested to report the language he or she spoke most often at home. If the languages were used equally often, the respondent was asked to report each.

- tables in this report distinguish between single responses (just one language identified as the mother tongue) and multiple responses (more than one language identified as the mother tongue).

Official Language

- refers to a person's ability to conduct a conversation in one or both of Canada's official languages, English and French.

Knowledge of Non-Official Language

- refers to a person's ability to conduct a conversation in a language other than Canada's official languages (English and French).

Symbols & Abbreviations

-	zero or too small to be expressed	%	percent

Planned Release Dates for Census Information

April 1997	Population & Dwelling Counts
July 1997	Age & Sex
October 1997	Marital Status, Families (Number, Type & Structure)
November 1997	Citizenship & Immigration
December 1997	Language
January 1998	Aboriginal
February 1998	Ethnic Origin and Visible Minorities
March 1998	Labour Force Activities, Industry, Occupation, Household Activities
April 1998	Education, Mobility & Migration
May 1998	Income
June 1998	Families (Social & Economic Characteristics), Dwellings, Households

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